

Practice THREE

DIRECTIONS

Read each passage. Then read each question about the passage. Decide which is the best answer to each question. Mark the space for the answer you have chosen.

Does Your Vote Really Count?

- 1 Your vote does count, but perhaps not in the way you think. Suppose you belong to a club or other small group. You and the other club members each vote on issues important to the group. Maybe you have a voice vote. Maybe you use a paper ballot. Maybe you just raise your hand. Each person has one vote, and each vote is counted directly. The majority rules. That's the way a democracy works. Or does it?
- 2 In the 2000 presidential election, the candidate with the most votes lost. How could that have happened? Don't we have a democracy? Yes, but there is more than one kind of democracy.

Athenian Democracy

- 3 Democracy began in ancient Greece. In fact, the word *democracy* comes from two Greek words. The word *demos* means "people." The word *kratos* means "rule." In Athens, each citizen was a member of the government. Each citizen had a vote. Together, citizens voted on everything. They voted on taxes. They voted on their laws. Like your club, each citizen's vote was counted directly. For the people of Athens, this worked well. That's because only about 10,000 citizens, excluding women and slaves, were allowed to vote.
- 4 In small towns across America, many local governments also work this way. All the citizens gather at a town meeting. Here people discuss issues facing the town. Then the townspeople vote. The majority rules again.

Representative Democracy

- 5 In most of America, however, our populations are too big for this direct system to work. Every one of us can't vote on every action our local, state, and federal governments make. So, instead of a direct or Athenian democracy, we have a representative democracy. We Americans elect representatives. We elect mayors, senators, and congresspersons. The few represent the many. They are our government.
- 6 In most elections, the candidate with the greatest number of votes wins. But in presidential elections, the rules change. Sometimes the majority doesn't win. That's what happened in the 2000 presidential election.

2000 Presidential Election Results		
Candidate	Popular Vote	Electoral Votes
George W. Bush	50,456,002	271
Albert A. Gore, Jr.	50,999,897	266

Source: Federal Election Commission